

TT is several Hollywood stories I rolled into one. It is the young native returning home to make good. It is the glamour and excitement of behind-the-scenes filmmaking. It is the cliffhanger: people trying to prove the worth of something they believe in, but having only six months to do it. It stars Henry Fonda, Katharine Hepburn, Jane Fonda, and others, and has been scripted largely by Charles Gaines, the celebrated South Newbury author and screenwriter. As the last credit - "Directed by Marty Leighton" - rolls across the screen and fades, the movie mogul's office comes into focus. There, behind her desk, sits Leighton, not chomping on an overlarge cigar like other Hollywood bosses, but puffing lightly on a cigarette as she prepares to talk about the New Hampshire Television and Film Bureau.

"What we do is act as hosts for New Hampshire," she says. "The films - they're guests in this area." The metaphor is an apt one. The Film Bureau must — as any good host issue an appealing invitation to its potential guests, prepare for their arrival, and, once there, make sure that they enjoy their stay. In return, the guests bring not a bottle of champagne or a box of chocolates, but a film production and all the dollars and excitement that accompany such a thing.

Twenty-seven-year-old Leighton, who grew up in Strafford and now lives in Concord, is comfortable playing host. But her position as director of the bureau is also based on some solid experience in the field of film. After attending the University of New Hampshire, Leighton found herself in Washington, D.C., working for a television station. She eventually rose to assistant producer at WJLA before looking homeward. "I came back to New Hampshire just because wanted to come back to New Hampshire," she admits, noting that the film directorship not only hadn't been offered but actually didn't exist when she moved back north. Ironically, she had been entertaining thoughts about trying something along the lines of the bureau upon her return. "I saw a great filming resource in New Hampshire," she says, "but no outlet for it." She explains that a perfect scenario for a film can exist, but perhaps the film company is not aware of the scenario or doesn't want to burst upon it as a

stranger. Information and aid: these are what Leighton wanted to supply as a film resource when she heard about the impending formation of the bureau "via a very large grapevine."

Her thoughts on New Hampshire and knowledge about film production got her the job over several other applicants. "When you're away from New Hampshire for awhile, I think you get to realize some benefits of the state," she says, confident that she will be able to accurately portray these benefits to others outside the state. A typical project, for instance, called for Leighton to cast about for photographs of one-room schools in the Stoddard area in hopes of attracting a Miami ad agency's shoe commercial to the state. Alas, a realistic setting alone was not enough to make the sale; that short bit was ultimately filmed in Vermont.

What are Henry Fonda. Jane Fonda, and Katharine Hepburn doing in New Hampshire? Marty Leighton invited them!

Fortunately, the Film Bureau's track record so far shows many more hits than misses; we may have lost a shoe ad to our Green Mountain neighbor but we have recently been the setting for some much larger-scale filmmaking. Not too long ago a major PBS feature wrapped up its shooting in Wolfeboro and Lebanon. where townspeople and local presses were busy with the excitement of Hollywood. One newspaper account of King of America ran two equalsized photographs of the filming that accurately represented a New Hampshirite's view of this movie brouhaha: The left photo showed that strange animal, the movie camera, being wielded by a technician; the right one featured an intriguing-looking local resident: "Robert Pralle of Wolfeboro, bearded and wearing a hat, was hired as an extra . . . " Everyone gets into the act.

Still another PBS production, the dramatization of Edith Wharton's Summer, is certain to set up camp in the Monadnock Region soon, and writer Gaines has already scouted sites for the cinemazation of his new novel, Dangler. Of course the biggest (continued on page 28)

BHIN SCENES

by Barbara Johnson

WHEN Thomas Shanton of Dunbarton was called to work on the movie On Golden Pond, starring Henry and Jane Fonda and Katharine Hepburn, his job was billed as assistant to the set dresser.

But it turned out to be that of furniture mover. And one of the pieces of furniture to be moved was his own.

The set crew had the job of furnishing an entire house from books to bedclothes. "For instance, we had to equip the kitchen with soap and detergents as well as dishes," Shanton said.

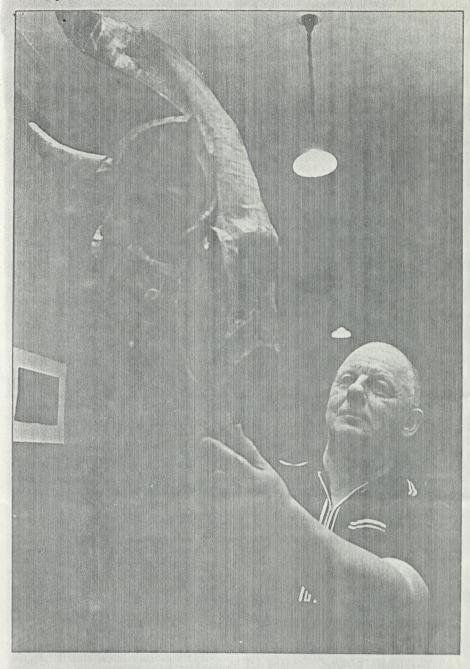
But first they had to find the furniture to use as props. And all the furniture had to look well-used, he said, as it would in any summer camp. "Castoffs from people's homes like the furniture has been there forty years."

They spent hours in a twenty-foot truck going all over the Lakes Region to antique shops to buy the props they needed. "I have no doubt that when they [the antique dealers] saw the truck coming with On Golden Pond blazingly lettered across the sides," Shanton said, "they tripled their prices. And I don't blame them."

The script also specified certain critical props, one of which was a double bed of specific description for a scene in the movie. The set crew scoured the area, without luck. Then Shanton remembered the "Al Smith" bed, in his father's home.

The rambling house behind the Dunbarton Town Hall, called Maple Lodge, was once a boardinghouse and tavern. Its former owner, Peggy Sampson of Albany, New York was a great admirer and friend of the late Al Smith who ran unsuccessfully for United States President against Herbert Hoover.

"Smith visited Maple Lodge and slept in the double bed, very finely



made of iron with brass finials," Shanton said. And when he described it to the set director, a crew was promptly dispatched to Dunbarton to bring the bed north. The bed, rented to Hollywood for ten weeks at \$20 a week, now serves as a lounge for Henry Fonda in his private dressing room.

Shanton said incredible sums of money have been flung around by the movie makers, including lunches for the entire crew of lobster and prime beef. "I'm a vegetarian," Shanton confessed, "but even I had to try some of those feasts."

People might envy him for working on a movie set, Shanton said, but it isn't all that glamorous.

"That's baloney," he said. "I spent all my time in a truck as a furni-

ture mover. Now that shooting is under way, the days are longer but we do less. I prefer to go around collecting furniture. At least we kept moving. And I did learn how to pack furniture."

Shanton's daily schedule now begins in Dunbarton at 6:30 a.m. He arrives at the Weirs at 9 a.m. where the entire company assembles and gets into cars and buses to drive to the set, at the end of a long peninsula. Then he sits around, moves a piece of furniture here or there. And sits again.

"It's boring," Shanton said. "The weather is hot, you don't do anything for hours, and you have to be absolutely quiet during rehearsals as well as shooting."

The lunch break is more glamor-

ous. The entire crew is taken by boat to the staging area and the lunch tent. "Beautiful Chris-Craft boats whizzing us back and forth," is how Shanton describes it.

At 6 p.m. the shooting day ends, then it's back to the Weirs and back to Dunbarton.

How did a Chinese scroll-painter, ballet master and dancer, producer, director and stage designer become a furniture mover?

Shanton is one of only two New Hampshire residents employed by the movie company. He was called, he said, because he has always been a member of the International Stage and Theatrical Employees Union, and only union members could work on On Golden Pond.

His background includes forty-five years of set design and lighting, but all for television and the legitimate theater.

When the union called Shanton and asked him to work on the movie set, curiosity had the better of him. Shanton had made films of his own, but never on a grandiose Hollywood scale.

"Frankly, I'm doing it for the hell of it," he said. "With forty-five years in the theater myself, I was curious to see what the Hollywood people know and don't know."

The comparison, he said, was not entirely favorable. "They're drab people compared to the legitimate theater."

On the bright side, though, the pay is excellent and he is planning to use that money to pay for the ballets he will produce for live-theater in Boston and for (as yet) an unnamed city in New Hampshire this winter. He also plans several more videotapes of ballet for Concord Cablevision.

"Right now I'm a furniture mover, not a set dresser," Shanton said. "And except for Fonda and Hepburn, I'm the oldest employee on the set. But I'm a tough ballet dancer and I'm surviving."

Barbara Johnson of Bow is a correspondent for the Concord Monitor in which this article first appeared.





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A Full Service Bank Member F.D.I.C. Hollywood (cont. from page 26) bit of news has to do with On Golden Pond, the Hepburn-Fonda-Fonda vehicle still filming on the shores of Squam Lake. Although the set of this movie, unlike the one for King of America, has been largely shut off to casual visitors because of the magnitude of the stars involved and the quiet nature of the drama, there is a pervasive excitement at Squam. "Is that her?" can be heard at all lakeside drug stores and restaurants. In a certain sense, this must seem strange to the younger Fonda and to director Mark Rydell as well; the former attended summer camp at Lake Winnipesaukee as a child and the latter summered at Newfound Lake. Their sense of deja vu is certainly being Film Bureau Director Marty Leighton interrupted by their new notoriety.

The excitement of On Golden Pond actually preceded the arrival of the production. Nearly a year ago, the person who owns the house that is the play's setting was approached by a friend freshly back from New York City. While there, the friend had seen the highly acclaimed Broadway version of the play. Disregarding the fact that the action's true setting is in Maine - a fact that led a recent People magazine blurb to credit the Down East state and not our own for landing the film - the friend raved about the performance and said, "The whole play reminded me about your cottage on Squam Lake." Obviously, the producers were to feel New Hampshire by the time she the same.

In film, things are not always what they seem. On Golden Pond is set in Maine, but it's being filmed at Squam Lake.

ing up to the charms of New Hamp- wonder what would happen to reshire? Well, truth be told, their quests for help if there weren't someawakening is not all that sudden. one here to filter them through. Un-There have been several films shot in fortunately, if we're not able to do it, the Granite State through the years: someone who is able will grab it." D. W. Griffith's Way Down East



and New Ipswich respectively. All those productions came before any film bureau was restablished in the state. But not even its detractors would argue that the bureau, in operation only since May, has not abetted the present healthy state of film production in New Hampshire.

The bureau itself cannot, and will not, take credit for all the current action. Marty Leighton, sitting in her airy Concord office, an office that looks not at all like a movie mogul's as it features no film posters or autographed portraits of stars of the silver screen, points out that King of America had very nearly decided on assumed her post. Then, too, there is no question On Golden Pond was scouring the Granite State, along with the rest of New England and the Canadian maritime provinces, for possible shooting sites. But if Leighton and other officials of the Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) hadn't been there to show off Squam Lake, filming of the play might well have gone Why, suddenly, are producers wak- elsewhere. As Leighton puts it: "I

Indeed. Consider that forty-five used the Connecticut River in 1920, states now have film bureaus of some Winter Carnival used Dartmouth sort and you can see why a produc-College several years later, A Sepa-tion, and its attendant economic rate Peace was filmed at Phillips boost, can be easily lost. Gaines, who Exeter in the early 1970s, and more was instrumental in establishing New recent productions such as The Hampshire's bureau, remembers a Gathering - Part II with Maureen situation years ago when he was Stapleton and The Europeans with working on the cinemazation of his Lee Remick employed Portsmouth first novel, Stay Hungry. Filming was

ongoing in his home state of Ala- continue. But then, as father to the bama. which did not then have a bureau, and things were going so poorly - little details being left undone and bureaucratic hassles arising - that the director, Bob Rafelson of Five Easy Pieces fame, very nearly moved the whole show to Georgia, whose bureau was more than ready to welcome him. Following that experience, Gaines decided to stay in Alabama an extra month during which time he "helped some" with the establishment of a film bureau.

As film budgets grew to their current \$9-million average, the boost to an area able to lure a suitable production became obvious. It is said a movie leaves behind fully a third of the cost of the film. If this is true, On Golden Pond will translate into an extra \$2 million minimum for New Hampshire and its people.

Such revenue is the justification for money spent in establishing and running the bureau. Charles Gaines's assertion that filmmakers "are fun to have around" may be correct, but even he admits a film bureau must prove its economic worth if it is to be allowed to continue:

MARTY Leighton draws an X on a sheet of paper. "If this is the tax money that it costs to fund the bureau from state taxes, then it is returned here," she says, as she draws another X. "This much comes in when a film comes to New Hampshire. Plus this and this and this." A slew of new Xs indicate just how much money Hollywood can deposit in New Hampshire coffers; these new Xs standing side by side make Leighton's getting paid by us to obtain dock-building permits for On Golden Pond, or phoning local people to assure them an incoming film won't be disruptive, these Xs make her salary seem trivial and at least justified. But life is seldom so simple.

For one thing, Leighton is describing with her graphics a hypothetical, hoped-for situation. Currently there is no New Hampshire tax money going into the functioning of the bureau. A grant from the New England Regional Commission in Boston represents the support system for the bureau, but this runs dry in November. What happens then "all remains to be seen," says Leighton. "I hope it will continue in some capacity, it just may change capacity."

Charles Gaines dares to do more than hope, he predicts the bureau will nor's office has put a fourth, non-

New Hampshire Film Bureau, there may be more than a measure of wishful thinking behind his optimistic prognostications.

Gaines takes a break from working on his screenplay of Summer to discuss the infant agency. He tells of helping Alabama establish its organization, and then says, "Cut to a year and a half ago. I was finishing Dangler and I knew it was going to be a movie — it was a natural. I wanted to make it in New Hampshire." Now. Charles Gaines has been able to raise many things in his day, most notably several thousand pounds of iron in countless exercises at his South Newbury farm. (His interest in bodybuilding supplied the fodder not only for Stay Hungry, but for the book and subsequent film that made him famous, Pumping Iron.) But for all that, he had trouble raising the Film Bureau. And then one day

The scene is Osgood's Restaurant in Concord. Young writer Gaines is at a table, discussing Dangler with the New York producers who have recently purchased the rights to film it. Governor Hugh Gallen enters and is seated. Boldly, Gaines approaches the gubernatorial table, introduces himself, and tells the governor he needs a film bureau. Cut. Print it. Beautiful!

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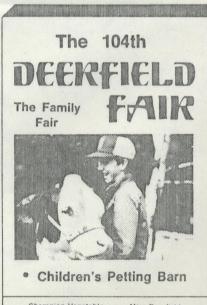
In actuality, it was not that quick a fade to the now-established bureau, but once various feasibility committees were set up and a grant was given, the wheels did get rolling. Gaines was established as head of a three-person board that included former Olympic skier and now travel agent Penny Pitou of Gilford and Barbara Boran Dunfey of Rye, a former sportscaster for Channel 7 in Boston and now chairwoman of the State Commission on the Arts. (Should the bureau continue, the board will grow. Already the gover-



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Author Charles Gaines was a leader in establishing the bureau.

voting member on it to act as a liaison with the State House.)

Gaines is now able to breathe deeply and take keen satisfaction in the bureau's auspicious beginning. "We have been lucky so far in getting two or three films right off the bat. Summer's the third; it's definitely going to be filmed in New Hampshire. That's the only reason Dezso Magyar (the director, who also made King of America) and I are doing it. That was a condition of our doing it. Dezso's wife, who runs the MacDowell Colony, is pregnant and he wanted to be nearby. And it would be a huge disappointment and surprise to me if Dangler were made somewhere else. Then there's the likelihood of part of The World According to Garp being filmed in New Hampshire. [Producers have scouted sites at Phillips Exeter.] I think it's gone very well. I would be really surprised, given all those things, if we got the rug pulled out from under us. In this case of having proved itself, I would be very surprised."

Director Leighton is happy with the way things have gone as well, and she thinks things can get better still. "We haven't really gotten to the aspect of selling ourselves to producers yet," she says. "It's very difficult to estimate the magnitude of this film bureau at this point. It could go very big, it could remain very intimate. Although you get your greatest amount of return from feature films, I would like to attract more television, and perhaps some commercials

though depend on the state. They want to get in and get out quick with a two-day shooting schedule. I would be happy to have myself proved wrong, but we won't get as much of this as Massachusetts, which has Boston and all those ad agencies."

In attracting projects, a question of integrity arises as well. What should a state agency try to attract? Should we aid in the production of such projects as the 1965 epic Wrestling Women vs. The Aztec Mummy, starring the immortal Lorena Velazques and Armand Sylvestre? "That's a very delicate situation," Leighton admits, noting some hotel people hereabouts are "glad The Shining wasn't made in New Hampshire." She indicates the board would deal with individual situations, and Gaines, who heads the board, says, "I don't see the Film Bureau as being a censorious agency at all. Our concern, responsibility, charge, is to bring films into the state. Of course, if it were an absolute X-rated piece of trash, we would not solicit it."

So New Hampshirites can breathe easily, and a little less heavily, knowing their state will not be a willing partner to any pornography. What they can look forward to is an increased dose of Hollywood, its attendant excitement, and some employment. Leighton says incoming productions can be expected to utilize "all kinds of labor: construction—there was a month of redoing a house for On Golden Pond—plus catering,

production personnel, technical consultants, extras. In upcoming films there will hopefully be some of these jobs." She points to the New Hampshire Media Foundation, a Concordbased organization of filmmakers, and says, "As we get going on things, they'll be instrumental in providing knowledgeable people." Still, she admits, filmworkers' unions preclude the possibility of locals even trying out for a wide variety of jobs on feature films.

"Filmmakers are fun to be around."

Beyond those lucky enough to gain access to a film set are those who will revel in seeing their home towns on TV or the silver screen. Not only will they enjoy seeing friends and neighbors get into the act, but they can partake of an age-old movie game: Catch the Director. Astute filmgoers gloried in noting that John Wayne watched the sun set over the ocean in Green Berets, although a westward-moving sun would have set over land in that part of Vietnam. Likewise, critic Stanley Kauffmann caught Robert DeNiro arriving in New York City by sailing past the Statue of Liberty and out to sea in Godfather, II. Already, filmmakers have played fast and loose with the highways between Boston and Portsmouth in aerial footage incorporated into last year's television drama The Gathering -Part II. Certainly Squam Lakers will take pleasure when On Golden Pond is released, seeing how the Fondas et al re-shape our state to fit the needs of their plotline. Even those who are now adverse to the idea of a film crew invading their summer serenity, whose dissatisfaction represents yet another problem the Film Bureau has dealt with, will probably trek to the cinema to see how home has been rendered.

These are subtle pleasures: the quiet excitements of being involved in the movies. While the economic considerations are quite reasonably the raison d'etre for a film bureau, these little things, too, must be taken into account when discussing the viability of such an agency. As Gaines puts it, filmmakers are fun to have around.

Robert Sullivan, our former managing editor, last wrote about films and the Granite State in the July 1979 RFD column.

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